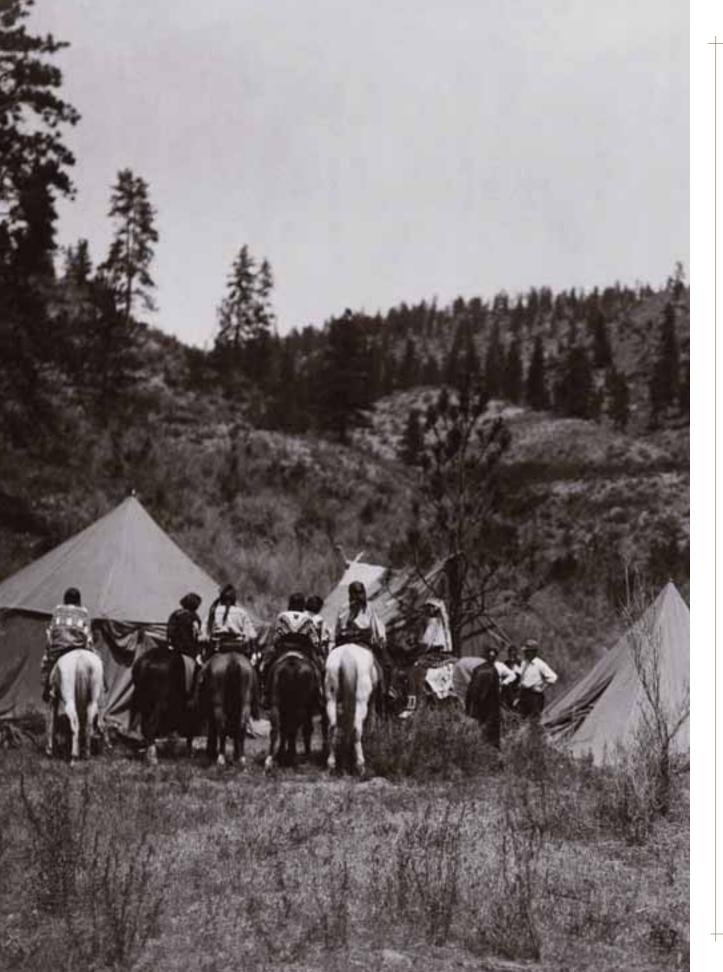


Breathtaking. Haunting. Inspired. Contrived.

The contradictions in these descriptions reflect the controversial nature of the most comprehensive photographic record ever made of North America's indigenous peoples—

The North American Indian by Edward S. Curtis.

This monumental work consists of portraits, landscapes, and scenes of more than 70 tribes whose homelands once encompassed two-thirds of the United States and Canada.



Curtis was drawn to photography during his youth and grew up to become owner of a portrait studio in Seattle, Washington. As a photographer in the Harriman Expedition to Alaska in 1899, Curtis met Indian expert George Bird Grinnell, who asked him to photograph the Blackfeet Indian people in Montana. This assignment inspired Curtis to document the other remaining Native-American tribes.

Curtis said he wanted to mythologies, religious rites, and ancient customs before they were "lost for all time." By the early 20th century, however, many aspects of Native-American culture had already disappeared, having been denigrated by scientists, denounced by religious missionaries, banned by government decree, or abandoned for a more modern way of life. Although an exceptional photographer, Curtis was not a professional ethnographer. In his passion

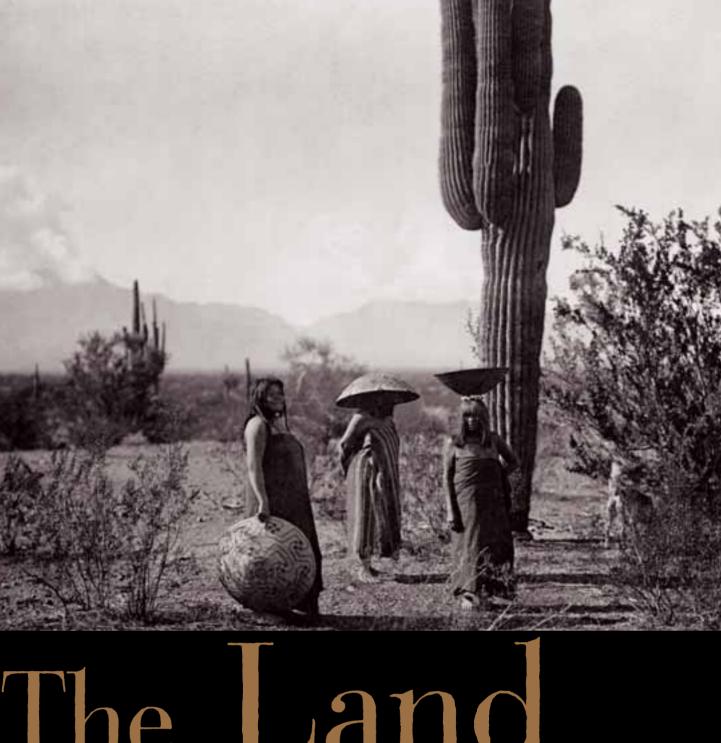
Contrived or not, images from *The North American Indian*—once seen—can never be forgotten. Curtis's images—from the Hopi and the Apache in the Southwest to the Inuit in Alaska—capture the dignity, beauty, and the strength of his subjects.

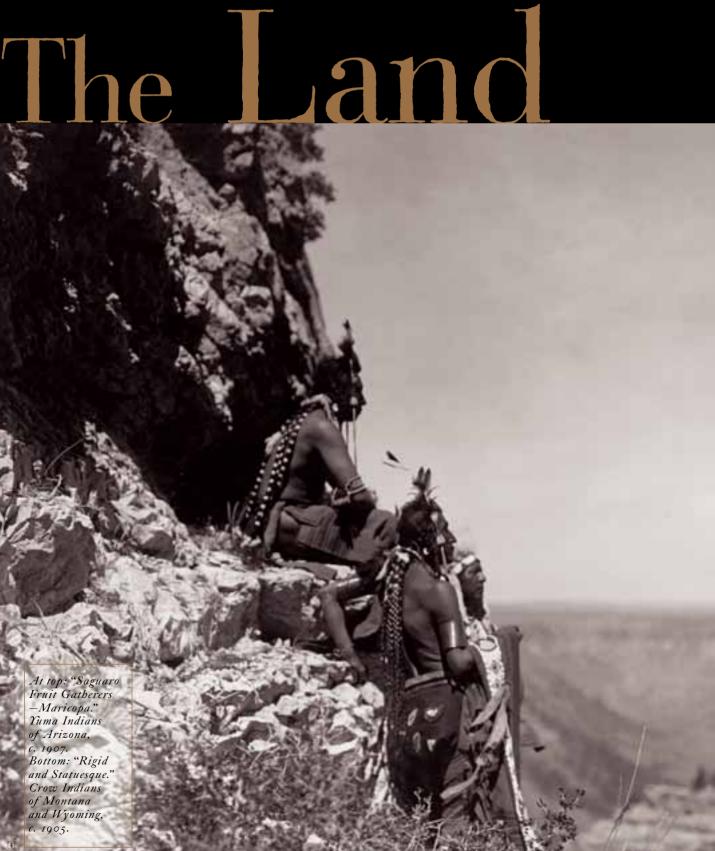
the printed picture to get the result he wanted.

to record the old ways, he often paid Indians to reenact ceremonies. Or he manipulated

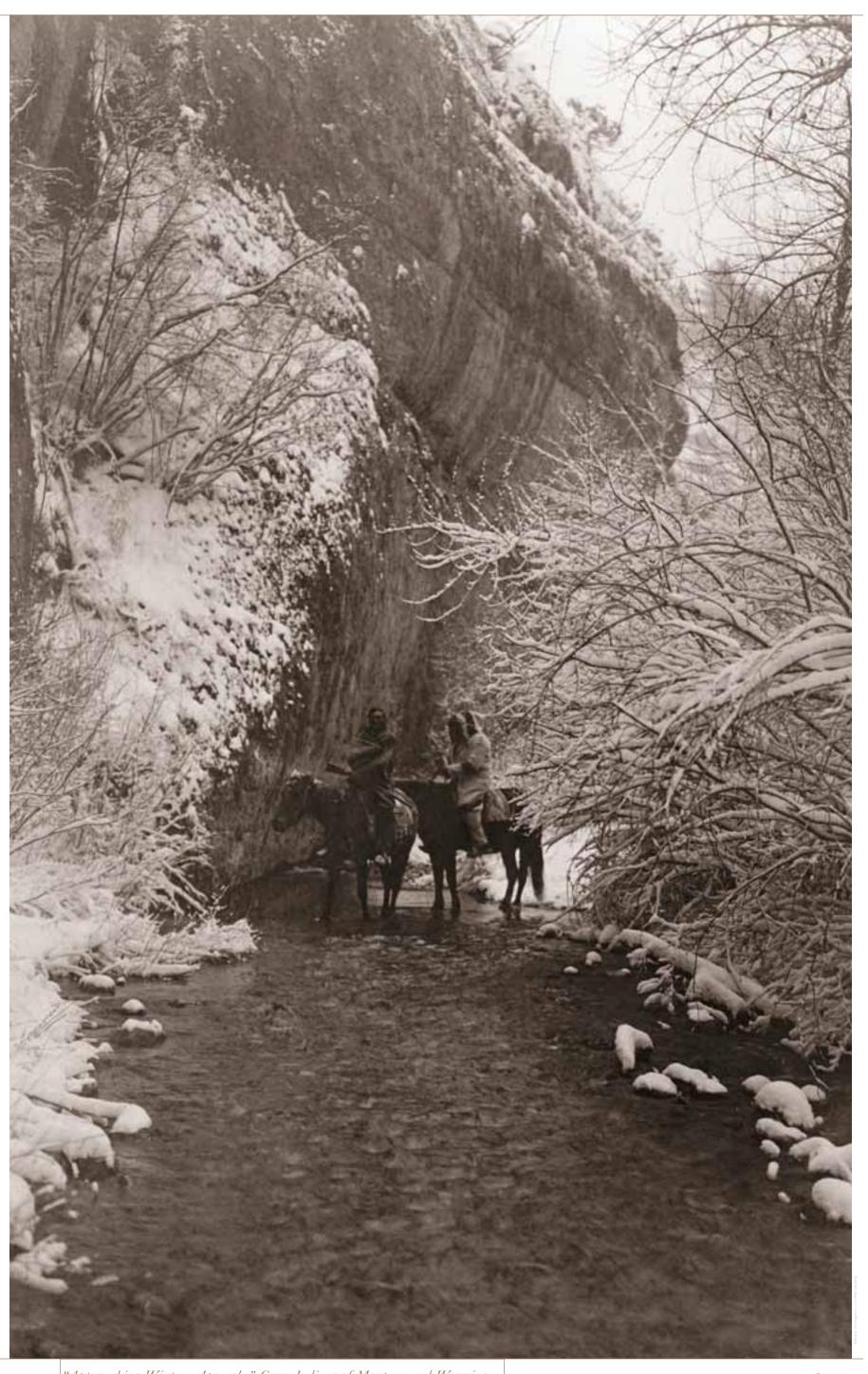
Curtis's methods may have been controversial, but his work has made an extraordinary contribution to the record of the human family.

At left, Curtis's camp among the Spokane during his 1910 survey of the interior Salishan tribes of the Columbia River Basin. Above: Edward Sheriff Curtis, 1868–1952, in a portrait circa 1899.



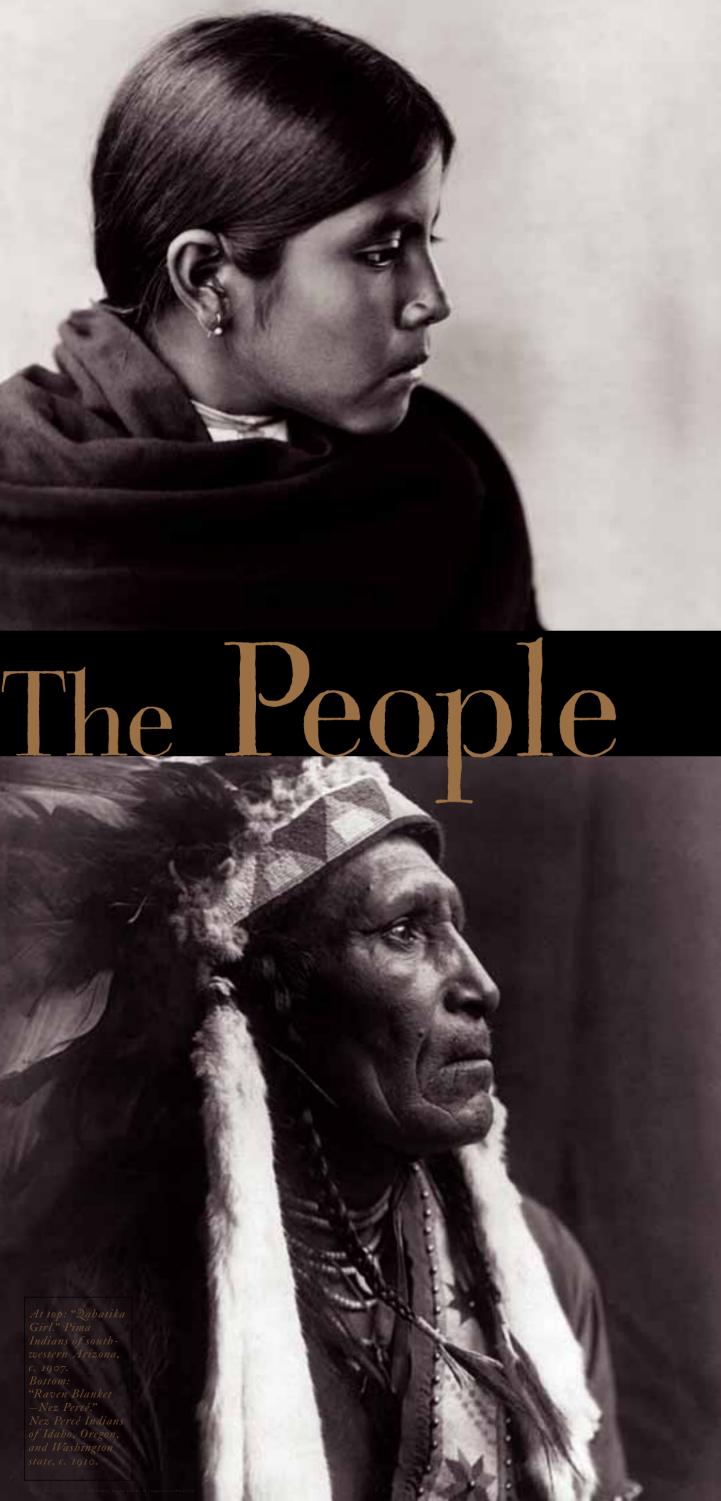


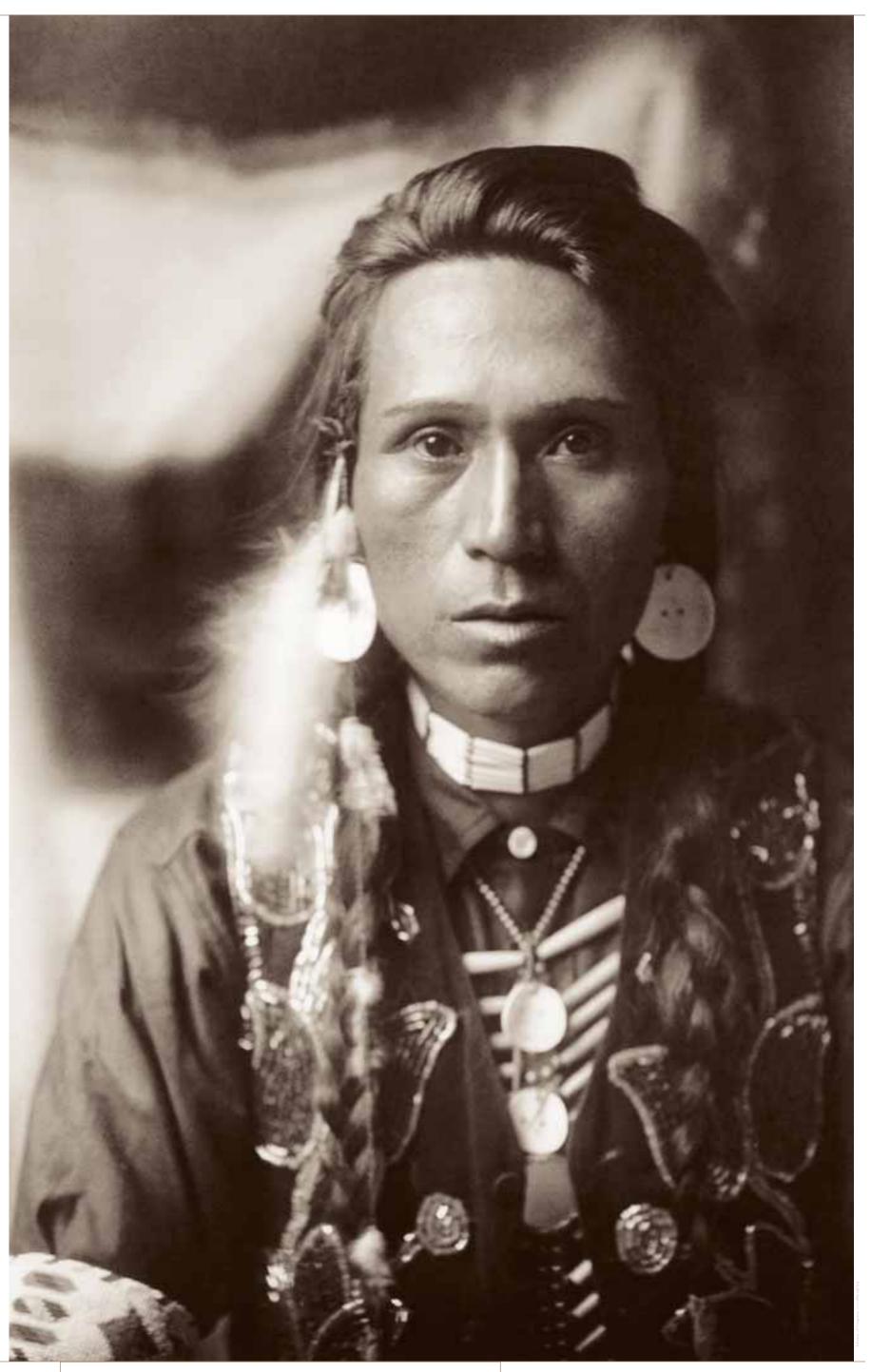




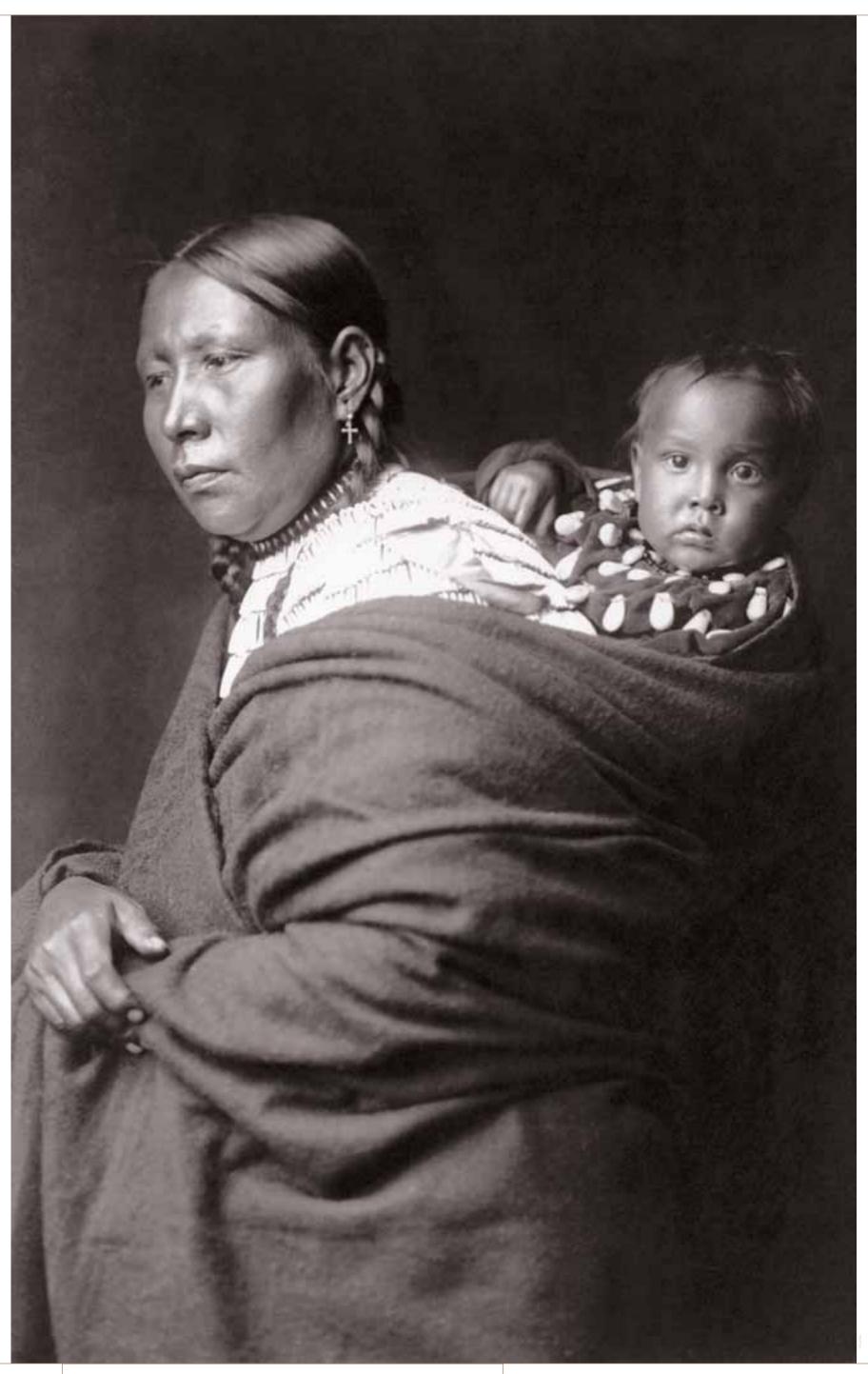
"Approaching Winter—Apsaroke." Crow Indians of Montana and Wyoming.

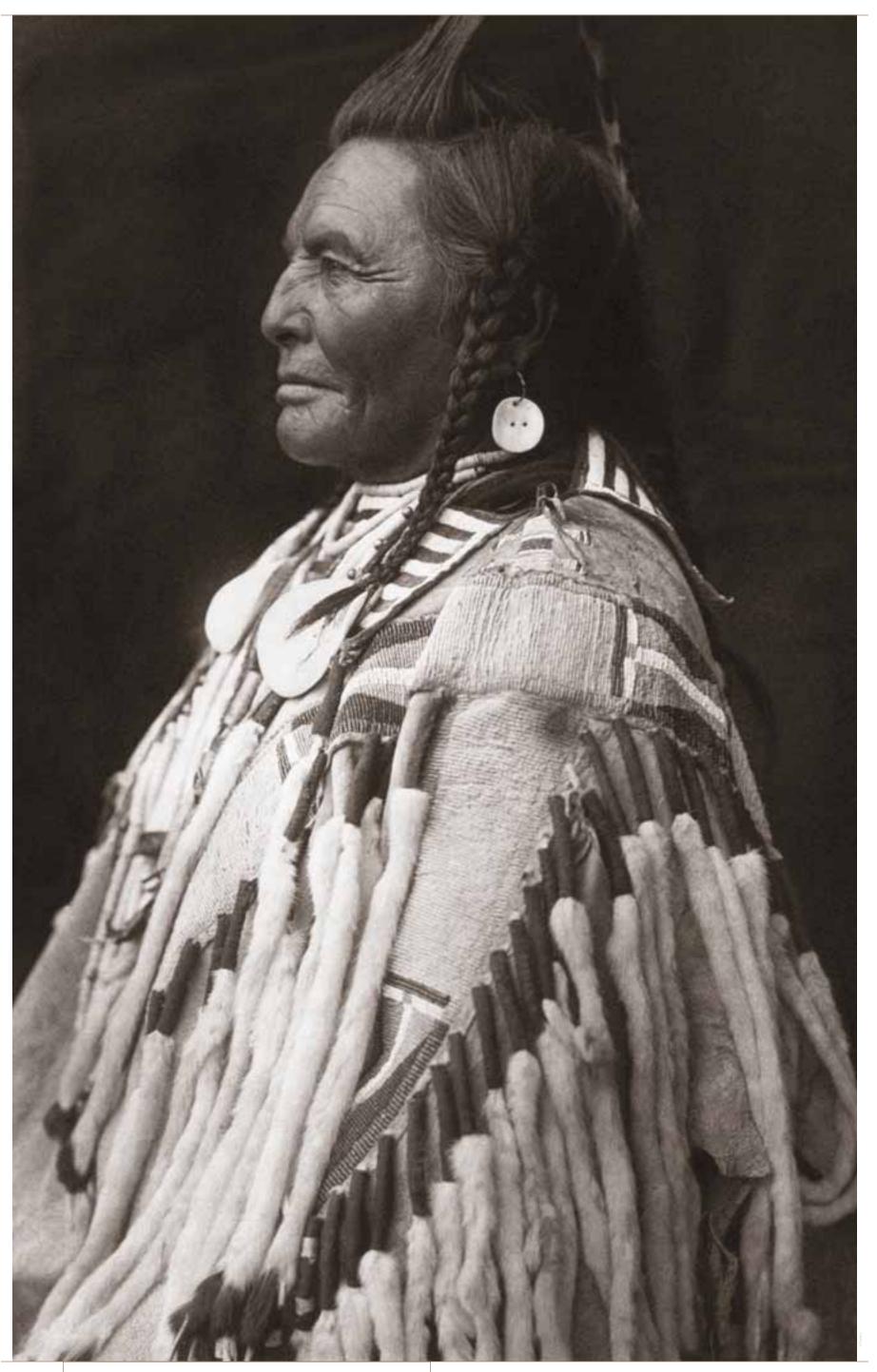






"A Young Yakima." Yakima Indians of Washington state, the Plateau Region.





"Shot in the Hand." Crow Indians of Montana and Wyoming.



Daily Life





"The Blanket Weaver-Navajo." Navajo Indians of Arizona.



"The Mealing Trough-Hopi." Pueblo Indians of Arizona.



"Eskimos in Kayaks-Noatak." Eskimo Indians of Alaska.